

Worker Protection Standards

Background



CropLife America (CLA) has long supported regulatory and legislative safeguards and advocated for stewardship initiatives to ensure the safe and judicious use of pesticide products. The health of

pesticide applicators, farm workers and farm families are important concerns for our industry.

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) disseminated the Worker Protection Standard (WPS) regulation (40 CFR Part 170) in August 1992 under the authority of the Federal Insecticide, Fungicide, and Rodenticide Act (FIFRA). The Worker Protection Standard is a federal regulation designed to protect an estimated 2.5 million employees in more than 600,000 agricultural establishments from occupational exposures to agricultural pesticides and protects workers while they are mixing, loading and applying pesticides. WPS requires workers to wear appropriate personal protective equipment, which may include gloves, eye protection, disposable coveralls and respirators. Further safeguards include required education and training for workers who handle and apply pesticides. In addition, pesticide safety information must be posted so workers can easily understand and follow safety procedures. Professional applicators also must obtain training and a license to legally apply pesticides, as must farmers who apply restricted-use pesticides.

Position

CropLife America and its member companies support improved worker protection standards, promote product stewardship and advocate for rigorous scientific studies of pesticide exposures to ensure the safety of their employees, pesticide applicators and farm workers.

Modern advances in pesticide application technology, coupled with the implementation of the WPS, have added significant safeguards to protect agricultural workers. According to government regulators, these actions have greatly reduced risks associated with pesticide applications.

CLA supports the WPS as a systematic and uniform approach to protect the safety of those who produce our nation's food and fiber. The WPS is based on sound scientific principles that allow food production to flourish while providing the best protection possible for farm workers, pesticide handlers and applicators. The WPS program should, however, be improved and made more effective by better enforcement of the existing rule, rather than significant additional regulation.